



American Christian ACADEMY

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Student/Parent Handbook
2026-2027 School Year

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Website
www.acacademy.com

Address
2300 Veterans Memorial
Parkway
Tuscaloosa, AL 35404

Phone
205-553-5963

ACCREDITATION

American Christian Academy is accredited by Cognia and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).

American Christian Academy is a coeducational, nonprofit, non-denominational, and independent Christian organization. The school is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Directors and admits students without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.

VISION

It is with deep conviction that American Christian Academy desires to provide a safe learning environment, Biblical integration into challenging academic work, athletic events, and other curricular and extracurricular activities. We invite you to join us on this journey by being involved in classroom activities, athletic events, facility improvements and travel opportunities.

MISSION STATEMENT

American Christian Academy exists as a partnership with parents to instill Christian character and academic excellence for all students.

HEAD OF SCHOOL'S WELCOME

Welcome to a new school year at American Christian Academy.

I am grateful for the privilege of beginning another year together, and I am excited about what God is doing in and through this school. ACA is more than a place where students attend classes, complete assignments, compete, perform, and prepare for the future. ACA is a family, a community, and a partnership with parents for the formation of students who are being prepared not just for college, but for life.

As we step into this year, I believe God is calling all of us forward. That includes our students, our teachers, coaches, staff, and administrators. It includes our parents and families. None of us are called to stand still. We are called to grow in faithfulness, in excellence, in humility, in wisdom, in courage, and in love for one another. Moving forward does not mean chasing change for the sake of change. It means taking the next faithful step God has placed in front of us.

For our students, that means bringing your best to the classroom, the stage, the field, the court, the chapel, the hallway, and the everyday moments that shape who you are becoming. God has given each of you gifts, abilities, personalities, opportunities, and influence. We want you to use every ounce of what He has placed in you — not for pride, not for comparison, and not simply for personal success — but for His glory and the good of others.

For our faculty and staff, moving forward means continuing to teach, lead, coach, correct, encourage, and shepherd with excellence and grace. Our calling is not just to deliver content. Our calling is to help form students. We are here to challenge minds, shape hearts, build character, and walk with students through the growth process. That work is sometimes clean and joyful, and sometimes it means stepping into the hard and messy places with students because we love them and believe they are worth it.

A wise Christian educator once told me that our calling is to be willing to get into “the pool of muddiness” with students. That has always stayed with me. All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Students will make mistakes. Adults will make mistakes. There will be moments this year when we get it right, and there will be moments when we need to seek forgiveness, make corrections, and grow. But by God’s grace, we will walk through those moments together with truth, gentleness, accountability, and love.

Colossians 3:23 reminds us, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.” That truth should shape everything we do at ACA. It should shape how we study, how we teach, how we practice, how we compete, how we serve, how we communicate, and how we respond when things are difficult. Excellence at ACA is not about perfection. Excellence is stewardship. It is giving our best because God is worthy of our best.

*Our mission remains clear: American Christian Academy exists as a partnership with parents to instill Christian character and academic excellence for all students. That mission is not just a statement in a handbook. It is the reason we do what we do. It is the filter for our decisions. It is the heartbeat behind our classrooms, chapels, programs, relationships, discipline, service, and pursuit of growth. This year, we will continue to lean into our core values: **Relationships, Growth, and Service**.*

We will build relationships because students are best formed when they are known, loved, challenged, and supported. We will pursue growth because none of us — student or educator — has arrived. God is still shaping us, stretching us, and calling us forward. We will serve because the gifts God gives are not meant to stop with us. They are meant to bless others.

There will be a drive this year to move forward together. That means we will ask more of ourselves. We will raise expectations where they need to be raised and strengthen what needs to be strengthened. We will celebrate what God is doing, and we will be honest about the areas where we need to grow. We will not settle for comfort when God is calling us to faithfulness.

At the same time, we will do this with a spirit that reflects Christ. Galatians 6 reminds us to restore with gentleness, to bear one another’s burdens, and to examine our own work before the Lord. That is the kind of community we want ACA to be — a place of truth and grace, conviction and compassion, high expectations and deep care.

Every student who walks our halls is created in the image of God. Every student matters. Every student has gifts. Every student has room to grow. Every student is worth our time, our effort, our prayers, our correction, and our encouragement.

I am praying that this year will be marked by spiritual growth, academic excellence, stronger relationships, meaningful service, and a renewed commitment to move forward together. I am praying that our students will become more disciplined, more courageous, more humble, more joyful, and more prepared for whatever God has in store for their lives. I am praying the same for those of us who lead them.

Thank you for the privilege of partnering with you. I am honored to serve this school, these students, and this mission. Let’s move forward together.

Stephen Hooks
Head of School

ELEMENTARY LEADERSHIP’S WELCOME

Dear ACA Elementary Families,

Welcome to the **2026–2027 school year** at American Christian Academy! It is with great joy and gratitude that we extend a warm greeting to both our returning families and those joining us for the first time. We are excited to begin another year of learning and growth as we trust in God's guidance and provision for each of our students.

At ACA, we remain committed to providing a Christ-centered education that nurtures both the mind and the heart. Our dedicated team of educators strives for academic excellence while instilling biblical values that help shape character, strengthen faith, and encourage students to grow in their relationship with Christ. Throughout this year, we look forward to creating meaningful learning experiences that challenge, inspire, and equip our students while keeping them grounded in the truth of God's Word.

We firmly believe that a strong partnership between home and school, centered on faith, is essential to student success. I encourage you to stay actively engaged in your child's learning, pray for and with them, and take part in the many school events and opportunities throughout the year. Your support and involvement make a lasting impact on their academic, spiritual, and personal growth.

Please watch for updates and important information as the year progresses. If you ever have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with you and walk alongside your family as we trust in God's faithfulness each step of the way.

Thank you for being a valued part of our ACA family. I look forward to a wonderful year of learning, faith, and achievement together.

Blessings,

Christine Chism
Elementary Principal
K4-5th Grades

Tracey Keaton
Director of Academics
K3-5th Grades

2026-2027 SCHOOL CALENDAR (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

August 6-7. 10-11 Teacher Inservice Days
 August 12- First Day of School, ½ Day
 September 7- Labor Day, No School
 October 12-13- Columbus Day/Fall Break
 October 30- Homecoming ½ day
 November 11- Veterans Day, No School
 November 20- Grandparents Day, ½ Day
 November 23-27- Thanksgiving Break
 December 16- Last Day before Break, ½ Day

December 17- January 4 Christmas Break
 January 5- Teacher Inservice Day
 January 6- First Day of 2nd Semester
 January 18- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, No School
 February 15- Presidents Day, No School
 March 22-26- Spring Break
 March 29- Easter Monday, No School
 April 16- Teacher Inservice, No School
 May 19- Last Day of School, ½ Day

GRADING PERIODS

1st Nine Weeks- August 12-October 9
 2nd Nine Weeks- October 14-December 16
 3rd Nine Weeks- January 6-March 12
 4th Nine Weeks- March 15-May 19

Report cards will be available on FACTS following the end of each grading period.

DAYCARE (K4-5TH GRADE) DAYS CLOSED

August 3-11- Prepare for School
 September 7- Labor Day
 October 12-13- Fall Break/Columbus Day
 November 11- Veterans Day
 November 20- Grandparents Day
 November 25-27- Thanksgiving Break
 December 23-25- Christmas Break
 December 31-January 1- New Years Break

January 18- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 February 15- President's Day
 March 22-26- Spring Break
 March 29- Easter Monday
 May 19-28- Prepare for Summer Camp
 May 31- Memorial Day
 June 18- Juneteenth
 July 5- Independence Day

STUDENT HANDBOOK PURPOSE AND PARTNERSHIP

The Student Handbook is provided to help students, parents, faculty, and staff understand the basic policies, procedures, expectations, and philosophy that guide life at American Christian Academy. It is not intended to address every possible circumstance or to explain the full rationale behind every decision. Rather, it is written to answer the questions that most often arise and to give our school community a clear, consistent framework for how we live, learn, serve, and respond to one another.

At ACA, our policies are not simply rules on a page. They are practical tools that help us carry out our mission as a Christian school. They help us provide a safe, orderly, consistent, and grace-filled environment where students can grow in wisdom, character, responsibility, and academic excellence.

Scripture teaches that parents carry the primary God-given responsibility for the training and instruction of their children. American Christian Academy exists as a partner with parents in that calling. We do not replace the home; we come alongside it. In shaping our philosophy of education, discipline, and student life, we seek to align our practices with biblical truth so that students experience consistency between what is taught at home, at church, and at school.

In that spirit of partnership, we ask our parents to support the school's expectations and to lead their children toward respect, obedience, self-discipline, and personal responsibility. As students mature, they should increasingly learn to govern their choices, accept responsibility for their actions, and live in a way that honors the Lord and serves others well. This is not merely a behavioral goal; it is a spiritual one.

During the school day and at all school-sponsored or school-supervised activities, students are expected to respond to faculty, staff, coaches, administrators, and adult supervisors with respect, cooperation, and obedience. These expectations help protect the learning environment, strengthen relationships, and allow our faculty and staff to care for students well.

When students, parents, faculty, and staff walk together in support of these policies and procedures, the school is able to function with greater clarity, consistency, and peace. Even more importantly, this shared commitment helps form students who understand that their choices matter, that their actions affect others, and that responsibility is part of discipleship.

The ultimate purpose of this Handbook is not simply compliance. Its purpose is unity. We desire for parents, students, teachers, and school leadership to be "of one mind" as we embrace the great privilege of helping students honor God with their whole lives.

The School Board approves the major policies and procedures of American Christian Academy and reviews them as needed. We welcome thoughtful written questions, suggestions, and recommendations from our school families. Please submit any written input to the Chairman of the Board or to the Head of School by January 31, 2027.

Current board members are listed on the school website.

PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We believe Christian education is a sacred calling. It is not simply the transfer of information from teacher to student, nor is it merely preparation for the next grade level, the next test, or the next college acceptance letter. At its highest and truest purpose, Christian education is the intentional formation of young people who know truth, love what is good, pursue excellence, serve others, and live their lives under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

We believe our work begins with a clear conviction: every child is created in the image of God and entrusted to us for a season of stewardship. Students are not products to be managed or statistics to be reported. They are souls to be shepherded, minds to be challenged, hearts to be shaped, and lives to be prepared for whatever God has planned for them.

ACA exists in partnership with parents. Scripture places the primary responsibility for the training and instruction of children in the hands of parents, and the Christian school comes alongside the home to support that God-given calling. We do not seek to replace the family. We seek to walk with families, strengthen families, and provide consistency between what is taught at home, at church, and at school. When home and school are aligned around biblical truth, students are given a stronger foundation for life.

We believe education must be rooted in truth. At ACA, truth is not something we create for ourselves or adjust according to culture. Truth is grounded in the character of God and revealed through His Word. Because of that, every subject has meaning. Mathematics reflects order and precision. Science reveals the wonder of creation. Literature helps students understand humanity, virtue, brokenness, and redemption. History reminds us that God is sovereign over time and nations. The arts reflect creativity because we serve a creative God. Athletics, leadership, and service teach discipline, humility, perseverance, and teamwork. Nothing is outside the reach of a biblical worldview.

We also believe Christian education must pursue excellence. Excellence is not perfection, and it is not pride. Excellence is stewardship and drive. It is the faithful use of the gifts, opportunities, and responsibilities God has given us. We should expect students to work hard, think deeply, write clearly, speak respectfully, solve problems, and grow in resilience. We should expect teachers to prepare well, teach with skill, love students individually, and model the character we desire to see formed in them. A Christian school should never use faith as an excuse for mediocrity. Our faith should compel us toward greater faithfulness.

At the same time, academic excellence must never be separated from Christian character. A student may earn honors, awards, scholarships, and admission to excellent universities, but if that student has not learned humility, integrity, self-control, compassion, courage, and reverence for God, then we have missed the deeper work. Education is not only about what a student can accomplish. It is about who that student is becoming.

For that reason, discipline is also part of education. Discipline at ACA should be firm, fair, consistent, and redemptive. The goal is not simply to correct behavior, but to help students grow in wisdom and responsibility. We want students to understand that choices have consequences, that authority is a gift when exercised rightly, and that obedience, respect, and self-control are part of maturity. As students grow older, they should require less external supervision because they are learning to govern themselves before the Lord.

We believe teachers are central to the mission of the school. Curriculum matters. Facilities matter. Programs matter. But the daily influence of a faithful teacher is one of the most powerful tools God uses in a student's life. Teachers at ACA are more than instructors. They are mentors, examples, encouragers, truth-tellers, and shepherds. They teach lessons, but they also shape culture. They help students see that learning is not disconnected from life, faith, worship, or calling.

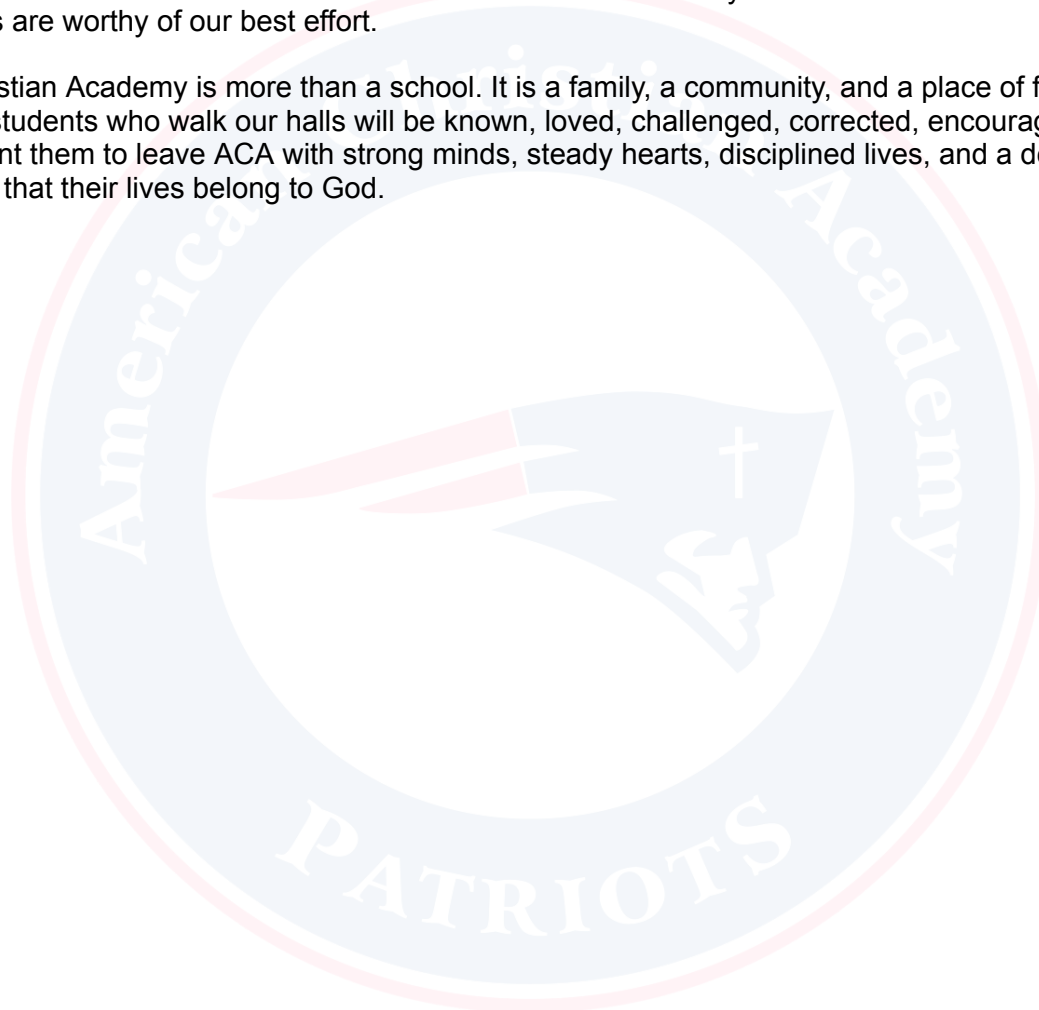
We believe a strong Christian school must be both loving and courageous. We must love students enough to know them personally, encourage them consistently, and walk with them patiently. We must also love them enough to challenge them, correct them, and call them higher. Grace and truth must not be separated. A school marked only by rules will become cold. A school marked only by affirmation will become weak. A Christ-centered school must hold both together.

We believe ACA should prepare students not just for college, but for life. College preparation matters, and we should continue to strengthen academic pathways, AP opportunities, college readiness, fine arts, athletics, leadership, and service. But our larger aim is to prepare students for faithfulness beyond ACA. We want graduates who can think biblically, communicate clearly, lead humbly, work diligently, defend truth graciously, and serve wherever God places them.

We believe culture is built through daily faithfulness. It is built in classrooms, hallways, chapels, practices, rehearsals, meetings, conversations, and quiet moments when no one is watching. The mission of ACA must be more than a statement printed in a handbook or displayed on a wall. It must shape how we make decisions, how we treat people, how we handle conflict, how we pursue improvement, and how we measure success.

Our philosophy of education is ultimately mission first. Every program, policy, classroom practice, and leadership decision should be measured against our calling to partner with parents, instill Christian character, and pursue academic excellence for all students. That mission is worthy of our best effort because the students entrusted to us are worthy of our best effort.

American Christian Academy is more than a school. It is a family, a community, and a place of formation. Our prayer is that students who walk our halls will be known, loved, challenged, corrected, encouraged, and prepared. I want them to leave ACA with strong minds, steady hearts, disciplined lives, and a deep understanding that their lives belong to God.



PARENTS'/GUARDIANS' STATEMENT OF COOPERATION

1. We understand and acknowledge that to have an orderly environment for learning to take place and discipline to be most effective, it must be administered immediately. We hereby invest authority in ACA to discipline our child as deemed necessary by the school; including demerits with their accumulating consequences, detention, suspension, request to withdraw, and expulsion. We agree to abide by such discipline. (Proverbs 29:15, 17; Hebrews 12:11)
2. We understand and acknowledge that failure to meet all financial obligations **when due** may be grounds for expulsion.
3. We understand and acknowledge that social media is not an appropriate outlet for dealing with school issues. We will refrain from making negative or disparaging comments about American Christian Academy, its staff, or students on social media sites.

American Christian Academy reserves the right to dismiss families who violate these requests.

ACA CORE VALUES

At American Christian Academy, our core values flow directly from our mission: to partner with parents, instill Christian character, and pursue academic excellence for all students. We believe these values should shape more than what we say; they should shape how we teach, lead, correct, encourage, compete, serve, and care for one another each day.

RELATIONSHIPS

We believe students are best formed in a school culture where they are known, loved, challenged, and supported. Relationships are at the heart of who we are at ACA because Christian education is deeply personal. We are not simply moving students through classrooms; we are walking with them as they grow in wisdom, character, faith, and responsibility.

Our commitment to relationships begins with our partnership with parents. God has given parents the primary responsibility for the training and instruction of their children, and ACA exists to come alongside families in that calling. We want our students to experience consistency between home, church, and school as they learn to follow Christ and live with purpose.

Relationships also shape the way our faculty and staff lead students. We want teachers, coaches, and staff members to know students by name, recognize their gifts, speak truth with grace, and help them become who God has called them to be. ACA is more than a school; it is a family and a community. That means we pursue trust, unity, accountability, encouragement, and care in every part of school life.

GROWTH

We believe every student has been created by God with purpose, potential, and responsibility. Growth at ACA means helping students mature spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. We want students to develop strong minds, steady hearts, disciplined habits, and Christ-centered character.

Growth is not the same as perfection. It is the faithful process of becoming more fully formed in wisdom, knowledge, humility, resilience, and obedience to God. We want students to learn how to think deeply, work diligently, communicate clearly, solve problems, accept correction, and pursue excellence. Academic growth matters because excellence is one way we steward the gifts and opportunities God has given us.

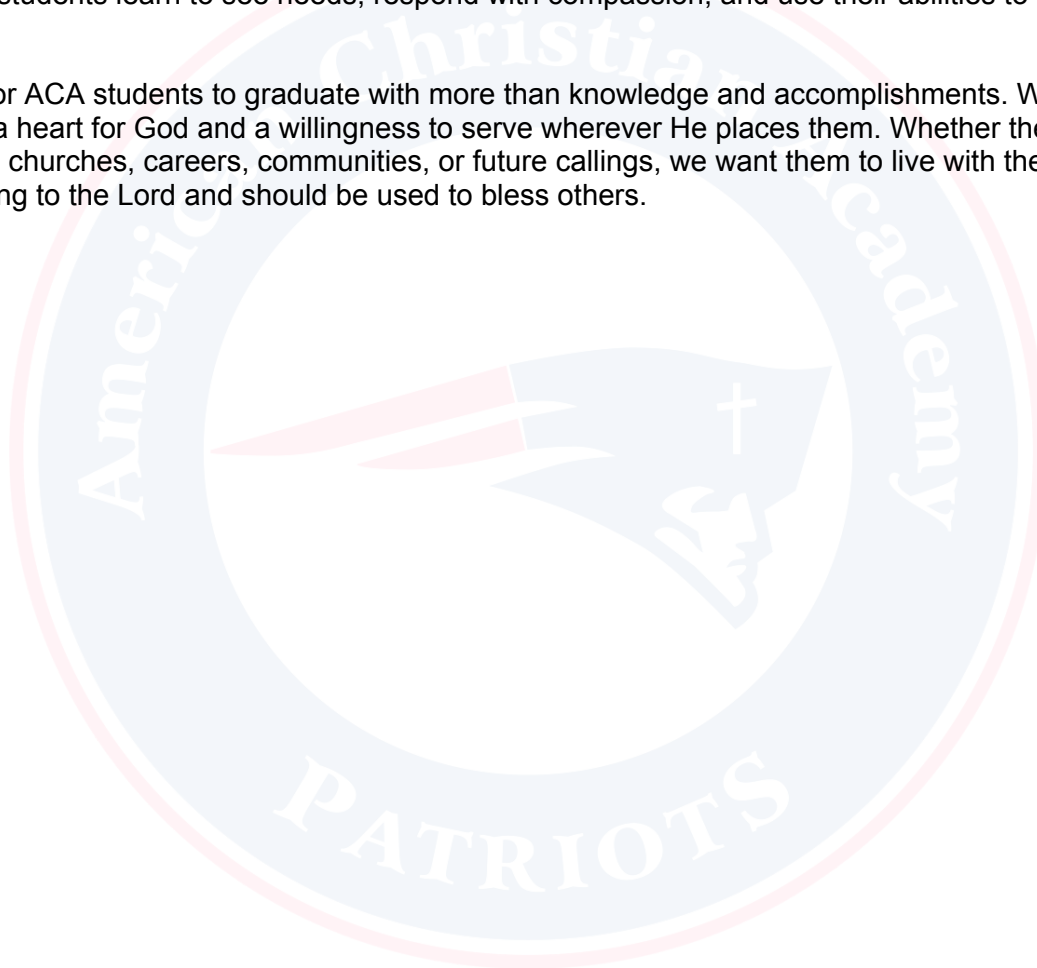
At ACA, we also believe growth requires challenge. Students need people who will encourage them, but they also need people who will call them higher. Whether in the classroom, on the stage, on the field, in chapel, or in moments of correction, our goal is to help students take the next faithful step. We want them to leave ACA prepared not only for college, but for life.

SERVICE

We believe gifts are given by God to be used for His glory and the good of others. Service is central to Christian character because following Christ means learning to live beyond ourselves. At ACA, we want students to understand that leadership is not about status, recognition, or personal achievement; it is about humility, responsibility, and faithful service.

Service begins in the everyday moments: showing kindness, honoring authority, encouraging a classmate, helping without being asked, using words wisely, and putting others before self. It also extends into our broader community as students learn to see needs, respond with compassion, and use their abilities to make a difference.

Our desire is for ACA students to graduate with more than knowledge and accomplishments. We want them to graduate with a heart for God and a willingness to serve wherever He places them. Whether they are leading in their homes, churches, careers, communities, or future callings, we want them to live with the conviction that their lives belong to the Lord and should be used to bless others.



EXPECTED STUDENT OUTCOMES

At American Christian Academy, our desired outcome is not simply that students complete a course of study, earn strong grades, or gain admission to college. Those things matter, and we pursue them with excellence. But our greater desire is that students leave ACA prepared not just for college, but for life — grounded in truth, shaped by Christian character, equipped to think biblically, and ready to serve wherever God places them.

Because ACA exists as a partnership with parents to instill Christian character and academic excellence for all students, these expected student outcomes describe the kind of formation we are prayerfully pursuing in the lives of our students. We want students to be known, loved, challenged, corrected, encouraged, and prepared. We want them to grow in wisdom, responsibility, humility, courage, and service. We want them to understand that their lives belong to God and that every gift, opportunity, relationship, and calling should be used for His glory and the good of others.

A. Spiritual Formation

- ACA students will increasingly understand who God is, who they are as image-bearers, and how God has provided salvation through Jesus Christ. They will be taught the truth of Scripture, the message of the Gospel, and the story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.
- Students will be encouraged to develop a genuine and growing relationship with Christ marked by faith, repentance, worship, prayer, obedience, gratitude, and love for God and neighbor. We desire for students to understand that Christian faith is not limited to Bible class or chapel, but should shape the whole of life.
- Students will learn to think biblically and develop a Christian worldview that helps them interpret truth, culture, relationships, vocation, suffering, success, and decision-making through the lens of Scripture. They will be equipped to articulate and defend their faith with humility, clarity, courage, and grace.
- Students will understand God's heart for the nations and the call of every believer to live on mission. Through instruction, service, missions opportunities, and personal example, students will be encouraged to share the hope of the Gospel and to see their lives as part of God's redemptive work in the world.
- Students will be taught to recognize their God-given gifts, talents, and opportunities as matters of stewardship. They will be encouraged to use those gifts not merely for personal advancement, but to honor Christ, strengthen others, and serve the needs around them.

B. Intellectual and Academic Growth

- ACA students will pursue academic excellence as an act of stewardship. We do not view excellence as perfection or pride, but as faithfulness with the abilities, opportunities, and responsibilities God has given.
- Students will develop the ability to read deeply, write clearly, speak thoughtfully, listen carefully, reason logically, solve problems, ask good questions, and engage ideas with discernment. They will be challenged to think critically and creatively in developmentally appropriate ways across every grade level and academic discipline.
- Students will learn that all truth belongs to God and that every subject has meaning within His created order. They will be encouraged to see biblical worldview connections in literature, history, mathematics, science, the arts, technology, athletics, and leadership.
- Students will be prepared for college, career, and calling through strong academic habits, intellectual curiosity, perseverance, responsibility, and the ability to apply knowledge in meaningful ways. They will understand that lifelong learning is part of faithful living and should continue throughout their personal, spiritual, professional, and civic lives.

- Students will also learn to use technology, information, and communication tools wisely and ethically. They will be taught to seek truth, evaluate sources, communicate with integrity, and resist the temptation to use knowledge without wisdom.

C. Relational and Social Maturity

- ACA students will understand that every person is created in the image of God and is therefore worthy of dignity, respect, compassion, and truth. They will be taught to value themselves and others according to God's design rather than the standards of culture, popularity, performance, or appearance.
- Students will learn to build healthy relationships marked by kindness, humility, honesty, self-control, forgiveness, and biblical reconciliation. They will be expected to treat classmates, teachers, coaches, staff members, parents, and guests with respect in both words and actions.
- Students will grow in personal responsibility. They will be taught that choices have consequences, that authority is a gift when exercised rightly, and that maturity includes learning to accept correction, make things right, and grow from failure.
- Students will understand the importance of family, church, school, government, and community in God's design for human life. They will be taught to engage society as responsible citizens who respect proper authority, seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.
- Students will be encouraged to lead with humility rather than entitlement. Whether in the classroom, on a team, on the stage, in chapel, in student leadership, or in daily friendships, they will be called to use influence in ways that help others flourish.

D. Cultural and Creative Engagement

- ACA students will appreciate beauty, creativity, and artistic expression as gifts from God. They will understand that the arts can reflect truth, goodness, beauty, brokenness, longing, and redemption, and they will be encouraged to use creative gifts in ways that honor the Lord.
- Students will learn to appreciate cultures different from their own while interpreting all cultures through a biblical lens. They will be taught to engage people with humility, curiosity, respect, and conviction, recognizing that God's kingdom includes people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.
- Students will be equipped to engage culture without being shaped uncritically by it. They will learn to identify ideas, values, and assumptions in literature, media, history, entertainment, technology, and public life, and to respond with biblical wisdom rather than fear, pride, or compromise.
- Students will grow in gratitude for the broader world God has made. Through classroom learning, travel, service, missions, fine arts, athletics, and community experiences, they will be encouraged to see beyond themselves and to understand their responsibility to love and serve others well.

E. Physical, Emotional, and Personal Stewardship

- ACA students will understand that their bodies are gifts from God and should be treated with gratitude, discipline, purity, and care. They will be encouraged to develop habits that support physical health, including appropriate activity, rest, nutrition, safety, and wise decision-making.
- Students will learn that spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health are connected. They will be encouraged to grow in resilience, self-control, perseverance, courage, and healthy dependence on the Lord and trusted adults.
- Students will be taught to honor a biblical understanding of identity, sexuality, marriage, gender, and the human body. These matters will be addressed with truth, grace, age-appropriateness, and a desire to help students live with conviction, purity, compassion, and obedience to God.
- Students will be encouraged to make wise choices regarding habits, relationships, entertainment, technology, substances, and personal conduct. We desire for them to understand that private choices shape public character and that integrity is part of discipleship.

F. Service and Leadership

- ACA students will understand that gifts are given by God to be used for His glory and the good of others. Service is not an extracurricular add-on at ACA; it is part of Christian formation.
- Students will learn to see needs, respond with compassion, and serve with humility. They will be encouraged to practice service in everyday ways — helping a classmate, honoring a teacher, encouraging a teammate, welcoming a new student, caring for younger children, and taking initiative without needing recognition.
- Students will be given age-appropriate opportunities to serve in classrooms, chapels, teams, clubs, fine arts, missions, community partnerships, and leadership roles. Through these opportunities, they will learn that leadership is not about status, but about responsibility.
- Students will be challenged to develop the posture of a faithful servant-leader: humble enough to listen, hungry enough to grow, and wise enough to care for people well. We want ACA graduates to leave with the conviction that wherever God places them, they are called to love Him, serve others, and help make what they touch better.

ACA GRADUATE PROFILE

- As students mature, we desire to see them increasingly become graduates who:
- Know Scripture, the Gospel, Christian doctrine, and the truth of God's redemptive story.
- Love God, their families, their church, their neighbors, their school community, and the people God places before them.
- Think with biblical wisdom about learning, culture, relationships, choices, vocation, and calling.
- Practice habits of prayer, worship, repentance, forgiveness, diligence, stewardship, and obedience.
- Serve with humility, courage, compassion, and a willingness to use their gifts for others.
- Lead by accepting responsibility, communicating with integrity, strengthening community, and helping others flourish.

In the end, our hope is that ACA students will leave this place with strong minds, steady hearts, disciplined lives, and a clear understanding that they were created by God, loved by God, accountable to God, and called to live for His glory.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

American Christian Academy is a non-denominational Christian school dedicated to teaching biblical truths related to the understanding of the Father God, Jesus Christ, His Son, and the Holy Spirit.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

In today's world, there are lifestyles and choices that do not align with biblical standards. As a result, it is essential for us to affirm these biblical principles in our school policies regarding admission and dismissal. These policies are outlined below:

FAMILY STRUCTURE

American Christian Academy adheres to the biblical and traditional definition of marriage as a covenant between one man and one woman, joined by God in the holy state of matrimony. Families that do not align with this biblical definition of marriage cannot partner with us in fostering Christian character in children. ACA reserves the right to deny admission to any family unit that does not reflect biblical principles. (Genesis 2:24; Proverbs 15:23; 1 Corinthians 7:2–40; 1 Timothy 3:2–4; 1 Timothy 5:14)

In today's culture, the physical aspects of relationships are often overemphasized. At ACA, we believe that the physical nature of relationships should not be overtly displayed. Public displays of affection are considered inappropriate. We emphasize that lasting commitments must include a strong spiritual foundation in addition to physical attraction. Our goal is to prepare students for future marital relationships and homes built on a Godly, spiritual foundation.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

At American Christian Academy, we believe that God created men and women in His image and likeness. In His divine plan for humanity, God established the marriage relationship between one man and one woman to produce godly offspring and reflect His holy purpose. Denying one's God-given biological sex is viewed as rebellion against God's design. Each individual is uniquely created at conception as male or female, in alignment with biblical teaching.

Students or parents who actively support or validate homosexuality or transgenderism are in conflict with the Christian character we aim to cultivate as part of our mission. Students engaged in non-biblical sexual behavior or identifying outside of their biological sex will not be eligible for admission. Additionally, any current student who openly advocates or demonstrates non-biblical sexuality, including through behavior or social media, will be dismissed. (Genesis 1:27–28; Genesis 19:5; Leviticus 18:22; 1 Kings 14:24; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Jude 7)

While maintaining these biblical standards, ACA upholds a respectful environment. Slander or offensive language related to sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

ORGANIZATION

THE SCHOOL BOARD

The School Board at American Christian Academy is responsible for hiring and evaluating the Head of School, ensuring leadership aligns with the school's mission. The board also approves the annual budget to support programs and growth. Additionally, it monitors progress toward long-term goals and adjusts as needed. Board members serve three-year terms, balancing continuity with fresh perspectives to support the school's success and growth.

HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Head of School at American Christian Academy oversees all operations, ensuring the school meets strategic goals and academic standards across grade levels. This role includes managing facilities, academic programs, and the annual budget. The Head ensures curriculum consistency and upholds a Christian worldview in decision-making, guiding the school's academic and spiritual direction.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Academic Program Directors at American Christian Academy ensure academic standards are met across all grade levels. They work with teachers to align curriculum with the school's mission and assess program effectiveness. They support teacher development and ensure students, including those with special needs, receive appropriate support. Their leadership reflects a Christian worldview, fostering both spiritual and academic growth.

PRINCIPAL

Principals at American Christian Academy oversee daily operations, managing students, faculty, and staff. They ensure high teaching standards, maintain a positive learning environment, and handle student behavior, discipline, and safety. Principals also make decisions on faculty and student selection while adhering to budget guidelines. Their leadership reflects a Christian worldview, supporting both academic and spiritual growth.

FACULTY

The faculty at American Christian Academy consists of passionate Christian educators committed to teaching from a biblical worldview. They bring diverse backgrounds and experiences, focusing on academic excellence and character development. Teachers receive strong training to maintain accreditation standards and provide Christ-centered leadership, guiding students in both academic and spiritual growth.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY

The parent organization of American Christian Academy plays a key role in supporting the school's mission, vision, and overall operations. It is typically composed of parents, volunteers, and community members who are dedicated to fostering a strong partnership between the school and families. This organization helps facilitate communication, promote school events, and contribute to fundraising efforts, ensuring that the school can continue to provide a high-quality, faith-based education. It also plays an essential role in creating a supportive environment for students and teachers alike.

GENERAL POLICIES

American Christian Academy has established guidelines to define acceptable behavior, ensuring a positive and productive learning environment. As ACA is a close-knit community, the implementation of discipline is crucial to maintaining order and supporting our educational mission.

By enrolling their child at ACA, parents/guardians acknowledge and agree that discipline will be administered promptly when necessary, in accordance with the guidelines established by the school. This may include the assignment of conduct points, detention, suspension, a request for withdrawal, or even expulsion. Parents/guardians understand that they are responsible for supporting these disciplinary actions and agree to abide by them, as referenced in Proverbs 29:15, 17 and Hebrews 12:11.

Additionally, parents/guardians understand that failure to meet financial obligations in a timely manner may result in expulsion. This ensures that our community functions smoothly and all members are held accountable to their commitments.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Regular attendance is essential for academic success and personal growth. Beyond academics, consistent attendance fosters self-discipline, punctuality, and responsibility—values that carry over into the workplace and daily life.

Students who miss class not only fall behind but also create challenges for themselves and their teachers in making up missed work. Parents are strongly encouraged to ensure absences occur only when absolutely necessary.

To be counted as present, a student must attend at least **3 ½ hours of the school day**. Absences are classified as **excused** or **unexcused**, both of which affect the student's learning and grades. Excessive absences are considered **truancy** and must be reported to the Department of Human Resources (DHR) as required by law.

EXCUSED ABSENCES OR CHECKOUTS

Absences or early checkouts are considered excused for the following reasons:

- Personal illness
- Death in the immediate family
- Medical or dental appointments (documentation required)
- Pre-approved absences must be authorized by the administration and require notification at least five days in advance.

Students must provide a written note upon returning to school explaining the absence. For medical-related absences, a doctor's note is required. The timeframe for making up missed assignments will be determined by the teacher.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES OR CHECKOUTS

Absences that do not meet the criteria for excused absences are considered unexcused. Students who are absent or leave early without a valid reason will not be permitted to make up missed assignments. Additionally, absences for trips will not be excused if administration has not been notified at least five days in advance of the trip.

EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

To receive **grade level credit**, a student's total absences may **not exceed 20 days** per school year, regardless of whether they are excused or unexcused.

- After **10 absences**, parents/guardians must provide **medical or legal documentation** for future absences to be excused.
- Tardies that accumulate into missed days also count toward the **20-day limit**.
- Trips will not be excused if the student has reached the 10 absence mark.

Exceptions may be granted in unusual circumstances after consultation with the administration. If a student experiences a **catastrophic event** leading to excessive absences, a physician's letter or written verification of the situation must be submitted for review.

CHECK OUTS AND CHECK INS

- All students must be checked in or out at the Elementary Building Desk.
- Students may not leave campus without being signed out by a parent or guardian.
- If someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up a student, advance notification must be given to the Elementary Desk and/or the student's teacher.
- Checkouts after 2:30 PM are not permitted except for emergencies or professional appointments to maintain an orderly dismissal process.
- Parents or guardians who choose to pick up their child in person at the Elementary Desk for regular dismissal may do so starting at 2:50 PM.

ELEMENTARY EARLY MORNING/AFTERSCHOOL CARE

- Drop-offs before 7:30 a.m or pick-ups after 3:30 p.m. will incur a \$7 daily fee.
- Late pick-ups after 5:30 p.m.
 - \$6 fee for pick-ups between 5:30-5:35 p.m.
 - \$1 per minute charge for pick-ups after 5:30 p.m.
- Additional fees apply for student care during Thanksgiving, Christmas and/or dates when student care is available.

MORNING ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

- School begins at 8:00 a.m.
- Students arriving between 7:00 – 7:30 a.m. must be escorted into the cafeteria and signed in for morning care.
- After 7:30 a.m., parents may use the elementary drive-through, where a teacher will direct students into the cafeteria. **Please do not park in the circle drive prior to 7:30.**
- At 7:50 a.m., students will be dismissed to their homerooms.

LATE START WEDNESDAYS (EVERY WEDNESDAY OF SCHOOL YEAR)

Every Wednesday we are going to a late start model, and school will not start for students until 8:30 A.M. This time will be used for Teacher Professional Development.

Elementary School Procedures for Late Start Wednesdays

- Students can still be dropped from 7:00-7:30 for early morning care (*there is still a charge for early morning care just like on a typical day*)
- First carline will run from 7:30-7:50 just like typical
- From 7:50-8:15 Students will be doing planned activities with their age group. **Students can still be dropped off from 7:50-8:15 but must be walked into school to find their class.**
- Second carline will run from 8:15-8:25 with an identical process to the first carline.
- Class will start at 8:30

Parent Guidelines for Morning Procedures:

- Parents may walk children to the elementary doors, but goodbyes should be said at the door.
- Parents are not permitted to enter the Elementary Building during morning arrival unless they have a scheduled conference.

TARDINESS

- Students arriving after **8:00 a.m.** are considered tardy. (Wednesdays tardy at **8:35 a.m.**)
- Late students must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian to the Elementary Desk to receive an admit slip.
- Work missed due to an unexcused tardy cannot be made up.
- Every 10 tardies will count as 1 unexcused absence.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

- Dismissal begins at 2:50 p.m. Each family receives two ACA carpool I.D. cards with a unique number.
- To maintain order, parents may only enter the building after 2:50 PM to pick up their child at the Elementary Desk unless they have a pre-scheduled conference.
- All check-outs must occur before 2:30 p.m.
- Students not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be sent to after-school care.

The **Elementary Driveline (Circle Drive)** is reserved **only for elementary students (K4–5th grade)**. To help ensure a safe and efficient dismissal, **middle school and high school students may not be picked up in the elementary driveline**. They must be picked up in their designated dismissal areas.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

The dismissal system ensures the safety and order of all students during arrival and departure. Parents are asked to follow these guidelines:

- Elementary students (K4 – 5th grade) will be picked up in the elementary drive-through.
- For safety reasons, K4 and K5 students **MUST** be picked up from the inside lane.
- Drive with care, keeping safety in mind for all people, both seen and unseen.
- No cell phone use (talking, texting, etc.) while entering or leaving campus.

- Enter 14th Street via Claymont Drive and turn left onto Patriot Drive.

PICK-UP PROCESS:

- Show your school issued dismissal hang tag to the staff member entering numbers.
- If you don't have a school issued dismissal hang tag, you must show identification for verification.
- **A person picking up without a school issued dismissal hang tag and/or not listed as a pickup contact in FACTS will be asked to park and go to the elementary desk for assistance.**
- Keep your hang tag displayed on your rearview mirror until your child is in the car.
- A teacher or safety patrol member will place students in your vehicle.
- Follow staff directions for traffic flow and movement through the carline.
- No parking or waiting in the drive-through, as it disrupts the traffic flow.
- If your student is not ready in time, you may be asked to pull forward, circle and re-enter the line.
- Middle and High school students may not be picked up in the elementary carpool line.
- If you wish to park and walk to pick up your child, please stand on the sidewalk with your dismissal number.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We are happy to celebrate your child's birthday at school with treats or snacks. However, we kindly ask that you **do not bring party favors or decorations**, including balloons. Please coordinate with your child's classroom teacher in advance to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Invitations to private parties may only be distributed at school if every student in the class is invited.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are expected to take responsibility for maintaining and preserving the school's property, including furniture, fixtures, facilities, and grounds.

- Any student who damages or destroys school property or the belongings of others will receive conduct points and will be required to pay for the repair or replacement of the damaged items.
- Students must also contribute to keeping the cafeteria, restrooms, gym, classrooms, and outdoor grounds free of litter.

CAFETERIA/LUNCH

Lunch is served every full day of school. Students in K4 – 5th grade will have a choice between milk or water with their lunch. Daily options include pre-made salads and sandwich boxes containing bread, cheese, ham or turkey, chips, and a cookie.

- Payments must be made through family accounts on FACTS.
- Credit card payments can be processed through Jenn Townsend by calling 205-553-5963.
- Menus are posted on FACTS and the ACA website.

Visitor Guidelines:

- Parents are welcome to eat with their child during lunch.
- Visitors must check in at the main office or elementary desk to receive a name badge before heading to the cafeteria.
- Due to the crowded cafeteria, you may need to move to a different table to eat with your child.

CAMPUS SECURITY

For security purposes, all doors remain locked during the school day. Students and parents arriving on campus must be buzzed in through the main entrance or the elementary building. Both locations are equipped with a camera and intercom system for visitor access.

- Students and teachers are instructed not to open any outside doors.
- All access decisions are managed exclusively by office staff.

Visitors:

- All visitors must sign in upon arrival and wear visitor stickers while on campus.
- Visitors must check out at the elementary desk when leaving.
- If there are legal restrictions regarding who may visit a child, official documentation must be on file in the main office. Elementary parents should also provide a copy to their child's classroom teacher.

Student Shadowing:

- Students wishing to shadow an ACA student must receive prior approval from the division principal, with arrangements coordinated through the Director of Admissions.
- Student visitors must adhere to ACA's dress code and cell phone policy.

Family Visitors:

- Family members are welcome to attend lunch and chapel.
- The administration reserves the right to deny access to any visitor or restrict access to school or students.

ACA STUDENT CELL PHONE & PERSONAL DEVICE POLICY

PURPOSE AND STANDARD

American Christian Academy partners with parents to form students who are spiritually mature, academically focused, and socially responsible. Personal technology can be useful, but during the school day it often disrupts attention, relationships, safety, and the classroom environment. For that reason, ACA maintains an away-all-day standard for student cell phones and personal electronic devices.

This policy is written to protect instructional time, student dignity, campus safety, and ACA's mission.

DEVICES COVERED

This policy applies to any personal device capable of communication, recording, internet access, gaming, music/audio, or electronic messaging, including but not limited to:

- Cell phones and smartphones
- Smartwatches and wearable communication devices
- Earbuds, headphones, AirPods, Bluetooth devices, and similar accessories
- Tablets, personal laptops, gaming devices, cameras, and any other non-school-issued electronic device

Elementary students are not allowed to have cell phones or smartwatches or any of the devices listed above on school property or in their backpacks.

If a student violates this rule, the device will be placed in the school office, and the parent must accompany the student to retrieve it. Repeat violations will be addressed according to the discipline plan.

Students who need to call home should use the school phone at the elementary desk with teacher permission.

INTERNET USAGE

At ACA, our goal in providing internet service is to promote academic excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. However, we recognize that this access may also bring material that is counterproductive to our mission of instilling academic excellence and Christian character in our students.

To address this, ACA has implemented precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. The privilege of internet access for students and teachers comes with the responsibility to use network resources in a moral, ethical, and legal manner.

COMPUTER ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES

- **Accountability:** All users are expected to demonstrate exemplary behavior at all times.
- **Supervision:** Internet access requires the direct supervision of a faculty or staff member.
- **Report Violations:** If you encounter inappropriate content, turn off the monitor and notify an adult immediately.
- **Content Standards:** Only access content that aligns with Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."
- **Respect for Others:** Using the computer or internet to hurt, harass, attack, or harm others is not tolerated.
- **Stewardship:** Protect the computer and network from damage or misuse.
- **Network Integrity:** Do not post chain letters or unnecessary information to avoid degrading the network.
- **Software Installation:** Ask for approval before installing software, downloading files, games, or programs.

- Copyright Compliance: Always observe copyright laws.
- Appropriate Content: Refrain from obscene, vulgar, or disrespectful content or behavior online.
- Password Protection: Keep your password private and do not share it. You are responsible for activities under your account.
- Personal Information: Protect your personal information and respect the privacy of others online.
- Account Access: Only access your own account, email, work, and folders. Do not use others' accounts.
- Educational Use: Computers are for research and educational purposes only. Social media, gaming, and non-educational emailing should be avoided.
- Food and Drink: Do not eat or drink near computers.
- Messaging: Refrain from instant messaging, chatting, or social networking.
- Streaming Video: Requires prior approval from a faculty or staff member.

Note: The administration reserves the right to **read emails** or access files stored on school computers if necessary.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Due to the wealth of new social media tools available to students, student products and documents have the potential to reach audiences far beyond the classroom. This translates into a greater level of responsibility and accountability for everyone. As an ACA student or parent/guardian, you represent the school anytime you post to social media.

Social Media is any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication. This includes social networks, blogs, photo-sharing websites, internet forums, and wikis. Social media tools are constantly changing. Below is a list of tools that might be used by students, parents/guardians, faculty, and staff:

- Social Networking: Facebook, LinkedIn, Ning
- Microblogging: SnapChat, Tumblr, Twitter, and Facebook
- Social Media: YouTube, Vimeo, Google Video, Flickr, Instagram, Vine, Reddit, TikTok
- Social Collaboration and Creativity: Prezi, Slideshare, Wikis, Google Apps, Blogging
- Social Bookmarking: Delicious, Digg, Wakelet

Reminder: Social media platforms are not appropriate outlets for dealing with school issues. Parents are asked to refrain from making negative or disparaging comments about American Christian Academy, its staff, or students on social media sites (including GroupMe). **American Christian Academy reserves the right to dismiss families who violate this request.**

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

THE MATTHEW 18 PRINCIPLE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. (Matthew 18:15)

American Christian Academy is a Christian school and the Word of God governs all of its affairs. As members of a Christian community, we enjoy the privilege of relating to one another not merely as parents and educators, but as brothers and sisters in Christ.

When conflicts do arise, it is important that they be handled in a biblical manner and in a way that leads to an effective resolution. The foundation of Matthew 18:15 is a direct, one-on-one meeting between individuals in conflict. Therefore, the first step in conflict resolution should always be communicating directly with the person involved.

In accordance with this principle, an administrator's first response to a vocalized complaint regarding a teacher/staff member will be to ask whether a discussion with the teacher in question has taken place. If one has not, the administrator will strongly encourage a meeting with that teacher. All questions, problems, or complaints should be brought directly to the teacher/staff member first before anyone else is involved. If the issue is not cleared up at this level through direct contact, it should be brought to the appropriate division head, which is the final authority on the matter. If the situation involves a moral or legal matter and the principal is unresponsive, parents may contact the Head of School under these extraordinary circumstances. School board members do not deal directly with the daily operational issues of the school and are, therefore, not directly involved in most of the conflicts that arise. Therefore, school board members should not be called to voice complaints or seek their influence in individual matters or conflicts.

Parents and students should work through the process outlined above as the appropriate means to settle conflicts.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

At ACA, we believe that every student has the right to learn, every teacher has the right to teach, and every parent has the right to expect a high-quality learning environment. In this environment, students are expected to demonstrate respect and an understanding of the responsibilities that come with being part of a learning community.

We believe the responsibility for behavior lies with each student, and our goal is for students to glorify God through their actions, words, and deeds. The school environment is where future learning, academic success, attitudes, study habits, and behavior are nurtured and developed.

Our Discipline System is rooted in the biblical principle of Proverbs 22:6:

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

This reflects our commitment to guiding students toward responsible behavior and shaping them into respectful, God-honoring individuals.

DISCIPLINE

At ACA Elementary, we use a point system to maintain a respectful and orderly school environment. These points are recorded on both a paper copy, which requires parent signatures, and electronically in the student's FACTS behavior file.

Point System:

- **1-Point Offenses:**

These are minor infractions, such as:

- Talking without permission
- Lack of responsibility
- Disruptive behavior
- Disobedience
- Not listening or following directions
- Misbehavior outside the classroom
- Other offenses as determined by the teacher's discretion

- **3-Point Offenses:**

These are more serious infractions, including:

- Rudeness or disrespect to others
- Cheating
- Theft
- Lying
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Verbal or physical abuse of others
- Fighting
- Disrespect to the teacher
- Other offenses as determined by the teacher's discretion

This system is designed to help students understand the consequences of their actions while encouraging personal responsibility and respect for others.

Sequence of Events for Accumulation of Points (per school year)

The following are the consequences for accumulating behavior points throughout the school year:

- 3 points:
 - One day loss of PE or recess
- 6 points:
 - Teacher/parent conference
 - Three days loss of PE or recess
- 9 points:
 - Behavioral Review Meeting with Teacher and Administration
- 12 points:
 - Out of School Suspension
- Points exceeding 12:
 - Each additional point results in one more day of Out of School Suspension
 - Possible Expulsion from school

This system is designed to help students understand the importance of managing their behavior and the consequences for repeated misbehavior. The goal is to guide students toward positive behavioral changes while maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment.

Behavioral Review

At ACA, our goal is to see students grow as both Christians and responsible adults, understanding their responsibility toward one another. When a student makes mistakes, our approach is to place them on behavioral probation in order to encourage long-term behavior change.

- If a student accumulates 9 discipline points, it signals a pattern of misbehavior. In such cases, a behavioral review will be scheduled with the parent(s), teacher(s), principal, and, when applicable, the student.
- During the review, expected behavior guidelines will be outlined for the student to follow moving forward.

Our hope is to guide students toward lasting personal growth and a deeper understanding of their responsibility in the school community.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS (OSS)

In the case of a serious violation of school policy or the accumulation of 12 discipline points, a student will be placed on Out-of-School Suspension (OSS). The following guidelines apply during OSS:

- The student will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities during the suspension.
- The student will receive zeroes in classes missed due to the suspension.
- The principal and/or the Head of School will be responsible for issuing OSS.
- A meeting with the principal and parents is required before the student is allowed to return to campus.

OSS is a serious consequence intended to help students reflect on their actions and take responsibility for their behavior. The goal is to encourage improvement and re-engagement in a positive, respectful manner.

EXPULSION POLICY

Students who demonstrate a blatant disregard for school policy, fail to respond to disciplinary measures, continue to exhibit negative behavior or attitudes, engage in serious misconduct, or bring discredit to the school—either on or off campus—may be asked to immediately withdraw from the school.

- Expulsion requires a meeting with the principal and a recommendation for expulsion.
- Parents have the right to appeal the expulsion decision to the School Board.
- Students who are expelled for disciplinary reasons will be prohibited from entering school grounds for a minimum of one calendar year following their dismissal.

Expulsion is a last resort, taken only after repeated behavioral issues have not been resolved. The goal is to maintain a safe and positive learning environment for all students.

BEHAVIORS WARRANTING IMMEDIATE OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (OSS) OR EXPULSION

The following behaviors are considered serious infractions and may result in immediate Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) or Expulsion:

- Fighting on school property
- Flagrantly abusive language, bullying, or racial disrespect
- Possession of weapons, including knives
- Leaving school without permission
- Failure of parents to cooperate with the school in implementing discipline measures
- Harassment or threats related to the school environment and/or people
- Assault or battery of a teacher or staff member
- Moral misconduct, including inappropriate contact or conversations of a sexual nature
- Other serious infractions or behaviors deemed by the administration

These behaviors violate the core values of respect and safety at ACA and will be dealt with in a manner that prioritizes the well-being and safety of all students and staff.

BULLYING POLICY

At American Christian Academy, we are committed to creating a learning environment that is caring, responsive, and safe for all students, free from bullying. We believe that every person is of eternal value, and it is essential that all individuals—students, teachers, and school staff—treat one another with courtesy, dignity, and respect.

Bullying is defined as repeated, unkind behaviors directed toward a student by another student, becoming unrelenting and noted by parents and/or teachers. The school does not tolerate bullying in any form.

If it is determined by the administration that bullying has occurred, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The aim is to maintain a safe and respectful environment where all students can thrive academically and personally.

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS AND SEARCHES

The possession of any weapon on campus or at any school-sponsored activity will result in Out of School Suspension (OSS).

Additionally, the administration reserves the right to search a student's locker, belongings, and clothing at any time if there is reasonable suspicion of a violation of school policies. This measure is in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all students and staff members at American Christian Academy.

REPORTING OFFENSES

American Christian Academy is required by law to report serious offenses—those that may constitute violations of criminal laws established by the State of Alabama—to the proper authorities. If the situation warrants, the school will also take appropriate steps to press charges against the student involved.

This policy ensures that the school adheres to legal requirements while maintaining a safe and secure environment for all students and staff.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE POLICY

Rationale

At ACA, our desire is to partner with parents to instill Christian character and academic excellence in every student. Scripture teaches, *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”* — 1 Corinthians 10:31. That includes the way we conduct ourselves, the way we treat others, and the way we present ourselves.

The purpose of a dress code is not to measure a student’s spirituality by clothing. Clothes do not bring us closer to Christ. Our desire is to help students think biblically, walk wisely, dress modestly, and participate in a school environment that is orderly, respectful, and free from unnecessary distraction.

There is an appropriate way to dress for school. Students are expected to come to school clean, neat, modest, and prepared to learn. Modesty is expected of every student. It is not the responsibility of one gender to manage the thoughts or choices of another. Each student is personally responsible before the Lord for purity, self-control, respect, and wisdom. We want our dress expectations to reflect the truth that every student is created in the image of God and should be treated with dignity.

Because modesty can involve judgment, the school has established guidelines that seek to be clear, fair, and consistent while still allowing appropriate individual expression. The administration reserves the right to determine whether a student’s dress is appropriate for school.

Rules are necessary, but they must serve the mission. We are here to educate and disciple students. Dress code enforcement should not become a source of unnecessary distraction, lost instructional time, or damaged relationships. When correction is needed, it should be handled with clarity, humility, consistency, and care.

Parents are asked to help their students make wise clothing choices before they arrive at school. When in doubt, students should ask a parent or a trusted ACA adult before wearing an item to school.

As styles change, the administration may clarify or adjust dress code expectations, including during the school year when necessary.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Students may wear clothing that is neat, modest, clean, and appropriate for a school setting.
- Approved ACA shirts may be worn Monday through Friday
- Clothing may not contain questionable, offensive, inappropriate, or distracting writing, pictures, symbols, or messages.
- Clothing may not be frayed, worn thin, ragged, sagging, excessively tight, or have holes.
- Undergarments may not be visible.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be no shorter than two inches above the knee.
- Sweatpants, wind suits, athletic shorts, gym shorts, and similar athletic wear may not be worn as regular school attire, even if the item is part of an athletic team uniform.
- Leggings are acceptable as long as they are covered in a way that is modest and school appropriate. When leggings are worn, the shirt, dress, skirt, sweater, sweatshirt, or outer layer worn over them must provide appropriate coverage in the front and back and must remain in place during normal school activity. Leggings should not be worn in a way that draws unnecessary attention or becomes a distraction from the learning environment. As with all dress code matters, students and parents are encouraged to make wise choices rooted in modesty, respect, and the desire to honor Christ
- Joggers are not banned as a category. Like all pants, they must be modest, neat, school-appropriate, not sagging, not excessively tight, and not function as sweatpants or athletic wear.
- Hats and head coverings may not be worn inside the building unless approved by administration for a specific reason.
- Hairstyles and hair colors should not be distracting. Hair color must be a natural shade.

GUIDELINES FOR BOYS

- Shirts may not contain questionable, offensive, inappropriate, or distracting writing, pictures, symbols, or messages
- Boys may wear shorts that are no shorter than two inches above the knee and have belt loops. Athletic shorts are not permitted.
- Boys may wear jeans or pants that are not frayed, worn thin, torn, sagging, or otherwise inappropriate for school.
- Boys may wear a variety of hairstyles, but hair must be off the ears, off the collar, and off the eyebrows. Hairstyles must not be distracting. Students are expected to plan haircuts ahead of time and should not need repeated reminders.
- Facial piercings are not permitted.

GUIDELINES FOR GIRLS

- Girls may wear modest shirts with appropriate necklines in the front and back. Shirts must stay in place during normal school activity.
- All shirts worn under jackets, sweaters, or sweatshirts must meet dress code standards.
- Undergarments may not be visible at the neck, arms, back, or through clothing.
- Girls may wear skirts, dresses, and shorts that are no shorter than two inches above the knee.
- Girls may wear pants or jeans that are not frayed, worn thin, torn, ragged, sagging, or excessively tight.
- Girls may wear leggings as long as they are covered in a way that is modest and school appropriate. The garment worn over leggings must provide appropriate coverage in the front and back and must remain in place during normal school activity.
- Sweatpants, wind suits, athletic shorts, gym shorts, and similar athletic wear may not be worn as regular school attire, even if the item is part of an athletic team uniform.
- Girls are not permitted to wear nose jewelry or other facial piercings. Earrings are permitted.
- Sweatshirts may be worn as long as they do not contain questionable, offensive, inappropriate, or distracting writing, pictures, symbols, or messages.

DRESS CODE ENFORCEMENT

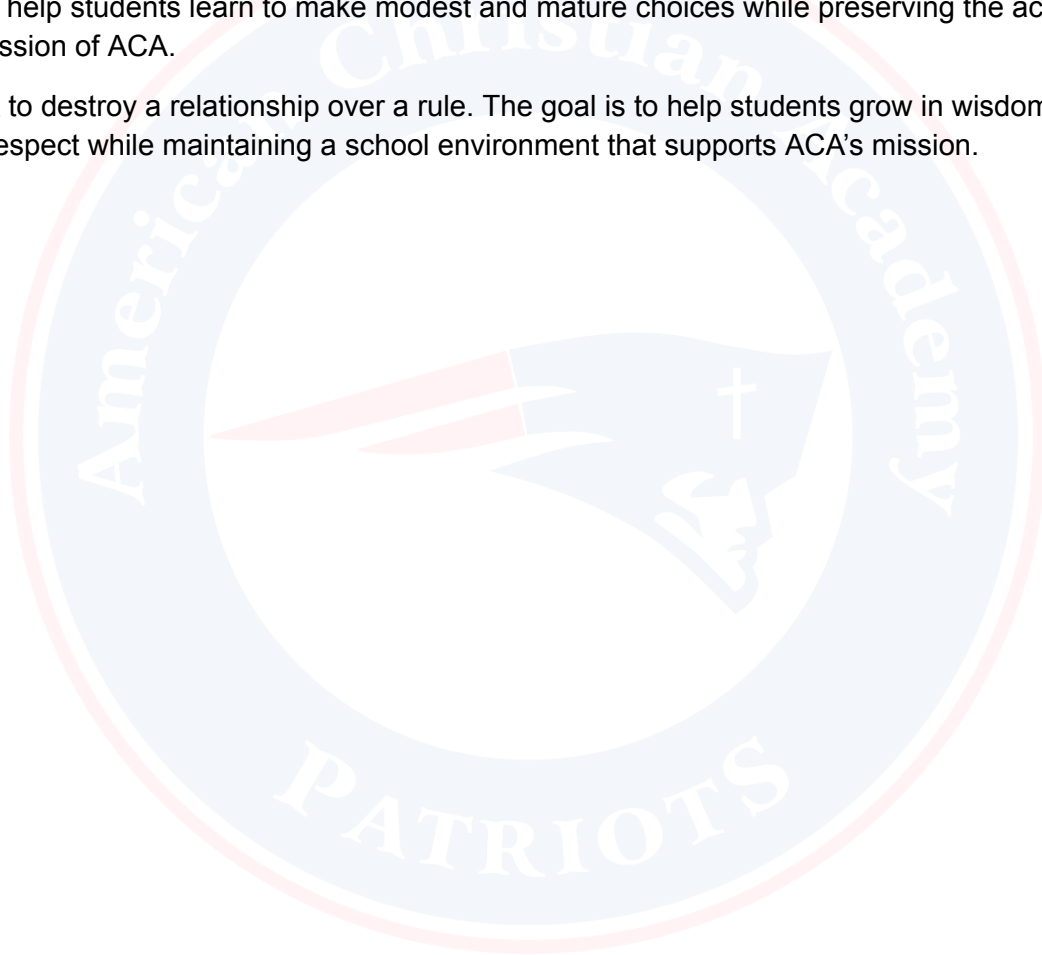
Dress code enforcement lies under the purview of administration.

Teachers and staff members are not responsible for making final dress code determinations, issuing dress code consequences, or engaging students directly over subjective dress code concerns. If a staff member observes a possible dress code concern, the concern should be communicated to administration.

Administration will determine whether the student's dress is appropriate and, when necessary, will address the concern with the student. Depending on the situation, the parent/guardian may be called to bring a change of clothes.

Dress code concerns should be handled in a way that protects the student's dignity, promotes fairness and consistency, preserves relationships, and minimizes disruption to instruction. When there is a concern, it should be handled with dignity, consistency, and care. The goal is not to create unnecessary conflict over clothing, but to help students learn to make modest and mature choices while preserving the academic and discipleship mission of ACA.

The goal is not to destroy a relationship over a rule. The goal is to help students grow in wisdom, modesty, maturity, and respect while maintaining a school environment that supports ACA's mission.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

The school nurse must have parental authorization for ANY medications to be administered at school.

- **OTC Medications:** should be reviewed and confirmed during the enrollment process in FACTS. Please review the student's medical history, current medications & OTC meds you allow to be administered by the nurse under the Medical Section in FACTS.

Prescription Medication Guidelines

1. **Complete the Authorization Form**

A parent or legal guardian must complete the **School Medication Parent Authorization Form**, and the student's healthcare provider must also sign the form. Copies may be made as needed, or additional forms can be requested from the school.

Important: The information on the **prescription medication label must exactly match the authorization form**. The school nurse cannot administer medication if there are any differences between the prescription label and the authorization form.

2. **Bring Medication to the School Office**

A parent or legal guardian must deliver the medication to the school office in its **original prescription container**, along with the completed authorization form. Medication should never be sent to school with a student.

3. **Medication Administration**

At the scheduled time, the student will report to the front office, where the school nurse will administer or supervise the medication according to the instructions provided on the authorization form.

4. **Picking Up Medication**

Any unused medication must be picked up from the school office within **one week** after the medication is discontinued or by the **last day of the school year**. Any medication not picked up by that time will be properly disposed of.

STUDENT ILLNESS

Students who are contagious should not attend school. If a student becomes ill during the school day, parents will be contacted and must arrange for their child to be picked up in a timely manner. Students must be fever-free (without medication) and/or have no vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. If a student is sent home during the school day due to fever or vomiting, the student may not return to school the following day.

Unless the school has a current medical doctor's note on file stating that a student is being treated for a condition such as acid reflux or other gastrointestinal issues, any student who vomits at school will be sent home and must follow the 24-hour return policy, including not returning the following day.

For serious illnesses such as influenza, students should remain home until cleared by a physician. ACA will follow CDC guidelines regarding school operations during pandemics or widespread illness.

Head Lice – Students with lice may return to school after 1 treatment of anti-lice shampoo & no other live lice are detected. If lice is detected in your child while at school, they must be picked up and treated accordingly before returning. (© Copyright 2026 American Academy of Pediatrics)

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) – Students diagnosed with pink eye may return to school after 24 hours of prescribed medication and when symptoms are improving. (© Copyright 2026 American Academy of Pediatrics)

Strep Throat – Students diagnosed with Strep Throat may return to school after the fever is gone, unmedicated, for 24 hours and have been taking an antibiotic for at least 12 hours. (© Copyright 2026 American Academy of Pediatrics)

Current Medical Problems – If your child has a medical condition such as asthma, food allergies, diabetes, seizures, or any other condition that may require medical attention during the school day, please provide the necessary medical forms to the front office and school nurse. This ensures staff are aware of the condition and able to respond appropriately in case of an emergency.

Accidents or Injuries – Students who are injured during the school day should report the injury immediately to a teacher or staff member. The school nurse will be consulted when necessary, and parents will be notified if further attention or care is required.

Forms are available on our website at www.acacademy.com or contact the school nurse to request forms.

LOST AND FOUND POLICY

Lost items are typically turned in and stored at the elementary desk. Students and parents are encouraged to promptly claim any lost belongings. The school assumes no responsibility for items left unattended or improperly stored.

To help with the return of lost items, please ensure all belongings are clearly labeled with the student's name. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity periodically throughout the year.

FIELD TRIPS AND CLASS TRIPS

Teachers may occasionally plan field trips or class trips. On these occasions, students are required to wear an ACA field trip t-shirt. Both students and chaperones are expected to adhere to school guidelines for behavior and dress during these outings.

SECURITY ON CAMPUS

At ACA, we strive to ensure that your students remain safe and secure at all times while under our jurisdiction. There are a series of security cameras stationed around the buildings, an SRO officer, and other security measures in place to provide a safe and secure environment for the students. Therefore, to provide adequate security for our campus, the following rules will be implemented:

- After school starts each morning, admittance for parents and visitors is restricted to the front school doors (Main Office) or elementary building doors (Elementary Desk). All entrances are locked to outside entry. Visitors are buzzed in by the office staff.
- All visitors, whether parents, relatives, or other guests, must sign in at the main office or elementary desk and receive a visitor's sticker, which must be worn at all times while on campus.
- All faculty and staff must wear ACA-issued identification badges during school hours.
- Our campus is closed to the general public.
- Students arriving late to school must be escorted into the building by a parent/guardian.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND PROCEDURES

In addition to day-to-day activities on our campus, there may be unusual or emergency situations that arise. These can range from school closings to emergencies occurring during class. As student safety is our highest priority, all ACA employees are trained to promptly identify, notify, and act to ensure the well-being of every student.

Our campus maintains a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan. Faculty and staff undergo annual training to ensure they are equipped to handle emergencies effectively. Regular fire, tornado, and intruder drills are conducted throughout the school year to reinforce these procedures and ensure the safety of all students.

FIRE ALARMS

In the event of an evacuation, students are led out of the building according to the evacuation plans posted in each classroom. Re-entry into the building is permitted only at the sound of the all-clear bell or upon receiving a signal from an administrator.

TORNADO ALARMS

In the event of a tornado warning, students are led to the designated shelter area as indicated in the plans posted in each classroom. Students are instructed to assume the following protective position: kneeling or sitting with their heads bent down, covered by a book, hands, or arms.

For the safety of all, it is our general policy not to release students to parents while tornado warning sirens are active. This policy is in place to prioritize the safety of both students and their families.

VISITORS OR INTRUDERS

All doors remain locked from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Any individual on campus without a visitor's badge will be approached by a faculty or staff member and escorted to the front office for verification.

STUDENT SEARCH & SEIZURE

The administration acknowledges that certain situations may arise that jeopardize the health, safety, and welfare of students and staff, necessitating the search and seizure of students, their property, vehicles, or lockers by school officials.

While students have the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures, school officials may conduct a search of a student's outer clothing, pockets, or personal property under the following circumstances:

1. **Reasonable Cause:** If there is reasonable cause to believe that a student is in possession of illegal or harmful items, or if there is a perceived threat to the safety of students or staff.
2. **Voluntary Consent:** If the student voluntarily agrees to a search, the search may be conducted by school officials.
3. **Lockers and Vehicles:** The administration reserves the right to search lockers, vehicles, or other personal property on school premises if there is reasonable cause to suspect a violation of school policy.

All searches will be conducted with respect for the student's privacy and dignity, and in accordance with applicable laws and school policy.

SUPPLY LISTS

Classroom supply lists for each grade level are available on our school's website. These lists are updated annually to ensure they reflect the current classroom needs.

Parents are encouraged to purchase the listed items and bring them to their child's homeroom during the Elementary Open House. This helps ensure that all students have the necessary materials for a successful school year.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Students are expected to demonstrate digital citizenship by conducting themselves in a safe, legal, and ethical manner when using technology.

SCHOOL-OWNED DEVICES

School-owned devices, including tablets, laptops, desktop computers, media equipment, and peripheral devices, are available for both teacher and student use. These devices are to be used exclusively for educational purposes. Students should not change settings (such as backgrounds or search settings) on school-owned devices. Vandalism, including damaging hardware, software, or data, is strictly prohibited. This includes uploading or creating computer viruses or malicious programs.

DEVICE STORAGE

All school-owned devices must remain on-campus and be stored in assigned locations, except for laptops issued to teachers and administrators.

TECHNOLOGY RESPONSIBILITY

Technology is integrated into instruction at ACA to foster skills like collaboration, problem-solving, and creativity. Students are encouraged to use technology productively and purposefully, contributing to their Christian communities and addressing real-world issues. Technology should enhance critical thinking and communication, helping students become global citizens who approach their digital lives with a Christ-centered worldview.

TELEPHONES

Office phones are reserved for school-related business and cannot be used by students except in emergencies. Students will not be called out of class to answer phone calls. To avoid disruptions, parents are encouraged to handle communications before the school day begins. In cases of emergencies, messages from parents will be promptly relayed to students.

TEXTBOOKS

Most textbooks are provided to students and remain the property of American Christian Academy. Students are responsible for the care and proper handling of these textbooks. Any excessive wear or damage to textbooks will result in a fine to cover the cost of repairs or replacement.

ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES

Certain classes may require additional supplies, materials, or books that are not supplied by the school. Students and parents will be informed of these requirements as needed for specific courses.

WEATHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

American Christian Academy strives to make decisions regarding school closings or early dismissals in a timely manner. In the event of inclement weather or poor driving conditions, public announcements will be broadcast on local television and radio stations.

Additionally, families and staff will be notified directly through a text message, with a follow-up email for further confirmation. Please ensure that your contact information is up to date with the school for timely communication.

PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION

ACADEMICS

American Christian Academy provides a well-rounded academic program designed to meet the needs of all students. Our curriculum emphasizes the skills necessary to graduate students with a strong Biblical worldview, equipping them to thrive in and positively impact today's society from a Christian perspective.

We believe that true reality is rooted in God and His purpose for humanity. As a result, our mission is to teach and nurture the whole child, ensuring that our graduates develop a Christ-centered understanding of the world, humanity, and life. This approach helps students grow not only academically but spiritually, preparing them to live out their faith and serve others with integrity and compassion.

HOMEWORK

We recognize that homework can be overwhelming, but we see it as an important tool for academic growth, fostering independence and preparing students for future success. Homework reinforces learning, develops time management, and encourages self-discipline. We ensure assignments are purposeful and balanced, allowing students to manage their time and engage in other activities.

ACCELERATED READER (AR) PROGRAM

The Accelerated Reader (AR) program is designed to encourage students to read regularly, improve reading comprehension, and develop a lifelong love of reading. Beginning with the 2026–2027 school year, AR will become an incentive-based program.

Students will have opportunities to earn rewards throughout the year by meeting their grade-level AR goals. Incentives may be provided by the library, school, and individual classroom teachers and may include monthly, quarterly, and end-of-year rewards. Rewards and requirements will vary by grade level and classroom.

To earn an AR incentive, students must meet both requirements for their grade level:

1. Reach the required number of AR points for the grading period.
2. Maintain an AR comprehension average of 80% or higher.

Students must meet both goals in order to qualify for incentives.

AR Incentive Goals by Grade Level

1st Grade

- Earn 5 AR points each 9 weeks
- Maintain an 80% or higher comprehension average

2nd Grade

- Earn 8 AR points each 9 weeks
- Maintain an 80% or higher comprehension average

3rd Grade

- 1st & 2nd 9 Weeks: 10 AR points

- 3rd & 4th 9 Weeks: 15 AR points
- Maintain an 80% or higher comprehension average

4th Grade

- 1st & 2nd 9 Weeks: 15 AR points
- 3rd & 4th 9 Weeks: 20 AR points
- Maintain an 80% or higher comprehension average

5th Grade

- 1st & 2nd 9 Weeks: 20 AR points
- 3rd & 4th 9 Weeks: 25 AR points
- Maintain an 80% or higher comprehension average

We encourage students to choose books that are a good fit for their reading level and interests. Through consistent reading and thoughtful book choices, students can grow as readers while working toward exciting AR incentives throughout the school year.

LIBRARY

The purpose of the school library is to enhance learning by providing a collection of instructional and recreational materials for students and teachers. Parents should be involved in overseeing the books their children select, as not all materials are appropriate for every grade level. All library books must be returned by the end of the school year, and fees will be assessed for lost or damaged books.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES AND STUDENT LEARNING PLANS

At American Christian Academy, we believe that ALL children are created in the image of God and are called to support one another in love and understanding, as stated in Colossians 3:23. We are committed to ensuring that every student receives the necessary support to succeed academically, socially, and spiritually.

If a student requires accommodations, parents/guardians must provide proper documentation. Once the documentation is received, our academic team will carefully review the information to determine appropriate accommodations and services based on the student's individual needs.

Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, classroom modifications or additional support services designed to help students thrive.

In order to qualify for a Student Learning Plan a student must:

- Have appropriate and current documentation indicating a need for special consideration. Current and appropriate documentation is defined as a written evaluation from a specialist within three years and includes diagnostic test results from a licensed psychologist, psychiatrist or psychometrist
- Be struggling academically.
- Be determined by the academic team that the disability is having an adverse impact on the student's learning and will make appropriate recommendations regarding eligibility and the availability of accommodations at ACA.
- Both parent/guardian and student show effort and do their part to succeed.

We value our partnership with families and are dedicated to working collaboratively to create an inclusive and nurturing learning environment where every child can reach their full potential.

TEACHER ASSIGNMENT

At the elementary level, classroom assignments are made by the school principal in collaboration with classroom teachers, with the goal of serving the best interests of the students.

While we appreciate and value the input from parents, requests for specific teacher assignments are generally not accommodated. This approach ensures that students are placed in environments that support their individual learning needs.

GRADING SCALE

A	90-100	Superior work
B	80-89	Above Average work
C	70-79	Average work
D	60-69	Below Average work
F	59 or less	Failure to meet minimum requirements

Report cards for students in grades 1st-5th are accessible online through the FACTS system and are issued quarterly. Parents are able to monitor their child's progress and view detailed grade information at any time throughout the school year. Instructions for accessing the FACTS system are provided at the beginning of each school year.

For Kindergarten students, progress reports are provided twice a year, and report cards are also issued twice a year.

K4 students receive periodic progress reports throughout the school year to keep parents informed of their child's development.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Substitute teachers have the same authority as regular faculty and should be treated with the same respect. They are responsible for making assignments, awarding grades, assessing student performance, and maintaining classroom discipline. Substitute teachers can fill out discipline forms, which the regular teacher will submit to the elementary administrator. We recognize that substitute teachers may face unique challenges in taking over a class on short notice.

CHAPEL

Weekly chapel services at ACA are an important part of the school's academic and spiritual life, promoting growth in faith and providing opportunities for students to experience corporate worship. These services include guest speakers, musical performances, drama presentations, and contributions from ACA faculty, staff, and students.

Parents are always welcome to join the chapel services, and we encourage them to attend whenever possible to share in the spiritual experience with their children.

TEACHER CONFERENCES

Teacher conferences at ACA are available upon request by either parents or teachers. To arrange a conference, parents may email their child's teacher directly.

During the school day, communication between parents and teachers should take place via email or by leaving a message at the elementary desk, where the teacher will return the call. Teachers are not allowed to take phone calls or respond to text messages during instructional time to ensure the focus remains on the students.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

At ACA, we strive to maintain effective communication with parents, recognizing that communication is a two-way process. Our primary sources of information include the school website, FACTS, and the Patriot Press.

Email is an essential communication tool, so it's important for families to keep their contact information up to date. Weekly announcements and newsletters from the Head of School, Principal, and/or classroom teacher will be sent via email to keep parents informed on school activities and updates.

CONCLUSION

This handbook is an essential resource for the American Christian Academy community, providing the foundation for the school's daily operations. It is important that parents thoroughly read and understand its contents, as they are responsible for adhering to the policies and guidelines outlined.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the school office, and they will direct you to the appropriate individual for further assistance. Thank you for your partnership in supporting the educational and spiritual growth of your child.

